

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A tractor having a vehicle frame with a pair of right and left elongate frame members spaced from each other and extending in a longitudinal direction and interconnected in intermediate positions by a cross member, an engine supported by the elongate frame members in a front region of the vehicle frame, a rear axle unit connected to rear axle connecting members fixed to the elongate frame members in a rear region of the vehicle frame, and a drive transmitting mechanism for transmitting drive from the engine to the rear axle unit, a front loader and a backhoe attachable to a front and a rear of the tractor, respectively, as supported by the vehicle frame, said tractor comprising:

a reinforcing frame unit for reinforcing said vehicle frame; and

reinforcing frame connecting portions connecting said reinforcing frame unit to said vehicle frame;

wherein:

said reinforcing frame unit includes elongate reinforcing frames extending along outer faces of said elongate frame members, respectively;

said elongate frame members have front loader post support members projecting laterally outwardly of longitudinally intermediate portions thereof; and

one of said reinforcing frame connecting portions is formed at a direct connection between a rear end region of each of said reinforcing frames and a rear end region of each of said elongate frame members in positions spaced horizontally such that the direct connection between the rear end region of each of said reinforcing frames and a rear end region of each of said elongate frame members lies rearward from said rear axle connecting members, and another of said reinforcing frame connecting portions is formed at a connection between a forward end region of each of said reinforcing frames and each of said front loader post support members.

2. (Currently Amended) A tractor having a vehicle frame with a pair of right and left elongate frame members spaced from each other and extending in a longitudinal direction and interconnected in intermediate positions by a cross member, an engine supported by the elongate frame members in a front region of the vehicle frame, a rear axle unit connected to rear axle connecting members fixed to the elongate frame members in a rear region of the vehicle frame, and a drive transmitting mechanism for transmitting drive from the engine to the rear axle unit, a backhoe attachable to a rear of the tractor as supported by the vehicle frame, said tractor comprising:

a reinforcing frame unit for reinforcing said vehicle frame; and

reinforcing frame connecting portions connecting said reinforcing frame unit to said vehicle frame;

wherein:

said reinforcing frame unit includes reinforcing frames extending along outer faces of said elongate frame members, respectively;

said reinforcing frame connecting portions are formed at a direct connection between a rear end region of each of said reinforcing frames and a rear end region of each of said elongate frame members ~~in positions spaced horizontally~~ such that the direct connection between the rear end region of each of said reinforcing frames and the rear end region of each of said elongate frame members lies rearward from said rear axle connecting members; and

said reinforcing frames are connected to said rear axle unit in positions spaced outwardly from said rear axle connecting members.

3. (Currently Amended) A tractor having a vehicle frame with a pair of right and left elongate frame members spaced from each other and extending in a longitudinal direction and interconnected in intermediate positions by a cross member, an engine supported by the elongate frame members in a front region of the vehicle frame, a rear axle unit connected to rear axle connecting members fixed to the elongate frame members in a rear region of the vehicle frame, and a drive transmitting mechanism for transmitting drive from the engine to the

rear axle unit, a backhoe attachable to a rear of the tractor as supported by the vehicle frame, said tractor comprising:

a reinforcing frame unit for reinforcing said vehicle frame; and

reinforcing frame connecting members for connecting said reinforcing frame unit to said vehicle frame;

wherein:

said reinforcing frame unit includes a cross frame interconnecting rear end regions of said elongate frame members, said cross frame being positioned ~~behind~~ rearward from said rear axle connecting members and ~~spaced horizontally~~ rearward from said rear axle connecting members.

4. (Currently Amended) A tractor as defined in claim 3, wherein said reinforcing frame unit includes a first cross frame directly interconnecting rear end regions of said elongate frame members ~~in positions spaced horizontally from and~~ rearwardly of said rear axle connecting members; and a second cross frame directly interconnecting longitudinally intermediate regions of said elongate frame members ~~in positions spaced horizontally from and~~ forwardly of said rear axle connecting members.

5. (Currently Amended) A tractor having a vehicle frame with a pair of right and left elongate frame members spaced from each other and extending in a longitudinal direction and interconnected in intermediate positions by a cross member, an engine supported by the elongate frame members in a front region of the vehicle frame, a rear axle unit connected to rear axle connecting members fixed to the elongate frame members in a rear region of the vehicle frame, and a drive transmitting mechanism for transmitting drive from the engine to the rear axle unit, a backhoe attachable to a rear of the tractor as supported by the vehicle frame, said tractor comprising:

a reinforcing frame unit for reinforcing said vehicle frame; and

reinforcing frame connecting members for connecting said reinforcing frame unit to said vehicle frame;

wherein:

said reinforcing frame unit includes a pair of elongate reinforcing frames extending along outer faces of said elongate frame members, respectively; and

one end of said reinforcing frames is directly connected to a rear end region of the elongate frame members ~~in positions spaced horizontally~~ rearward from said rear axle connecting members; and the other end of said reinforcing frames is directly connected to a front end region of said elongate frame members ~~located~~ forwardly of engine supporting portions of the elongate frame members.

6. (Original) A tractor as defined in claim 5, wherein said reinforcing frames have backhoe attaching members formed at rear ends thereof.

7. (Previously Presented) A tractor as defined in claim 2, wherein a front loader is attachable to a front of the tractor as supported by the vehicle frame;

said elongate frame members have front loader post support members projecting laterally outwardly of longitudinally intermediate portions thereof; ~~one of said reinforcing frame connecting portions is formed at a connection between the rear end region of each of said reinforcing frames and the rear end region of each of said elongate frame members in positions spaced horizontally from said rear axle connecting members;~~ and another of said reinforcing frame connecting portions is formed at a connection between a forward end region of each of said reinforcing frames and each of said front loader post support members; and

said reinforcing frames are connected to said rear axle unit in longitudinally intermediate positions thereof ~~spaced laterally outwardly from said rear axle connecting members.~~